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## **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

- 1. (Currently Amended) A process for the preparation of benzaldehyde comprising:
  - (i) subjecting toluene to liquid phase oxidation in a reaction mixture comprising:
    - (a) an organic solvent and in the presence of;
- (b) a catalyst system comprising of at least one transition metal/metals and a bromide source as a promoter; and in the presence of
- (c) diluted oxygen, wherein the concentration of oxygen is in the range from 1 to 10% of the reaction mixture,
  - (ii) cooling the reaction mixture to room temperature and
  - (iii) separating the products benzaldehyde.
- 2. (Currently Amended) A <u>The</u> process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the <del>products</del> benzaldehyde is separated by distillation.
- 3. (Currently Amended) A <u>The</u> process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the transitional metal is selected from the group consisting of manganese, chromium, iron, vanadium, cobalt, molybdenum, and <u>any a combination thereof.</u>
- 4. (Currently Amended) A <u>The</u> process as claimed in claim 3 wherein the transition metal catalyst comprises a combination of manganese and iron-or manganese and vanadium.
- 5. (Currently Amended) A <u>The</u> process as claimed in claim 4 wherein the mole ratio of manganese to iron or manganese to vanadium is in the range from 0.1 to 10.
- 6. (Currently Amended) A <u>The</u> process as claimed in claim 5 wherein the mole ratio of manganese to iron or manganese to vanadium is in the range from 0.2 to 5.0.

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- 7. (Currently Amended) A <u>The</u> process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the transitional metal is <del>used in the form of</del> a salt selected from the group consisting of acetates, bromides, carbonates, fluoride, iodides, chlorides, nitrates, sulfates and vanadates.
- 8. (Currently Amended) A <u>The</u> process as claimed in claim 7 wherein the transitional metal is <u>a salt</u> selected from the group consisting of acetates, chlorides and vanadates.
- 9. (Currently Amended) A <u>The</u> process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the bromide promoter is selected from the group consisting of sodium bromide, hydrogen bromide and zinc bromide.
- 10. (Currently Amended) A <u>The</u> process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the bromide promoter comprises sodium bromide.
- 11. (Currently Amended) A <u>The</u> process as claimed in claim 3 wherein the concentration of manganese with respect to toluene is in the range of 0.1 7 mol %.
- 12. (Currently Amended) A <u>The</u> process as claimed in claim 3 wherein the concentration of manganese with respect to toluene is in the range of 0.3 5.0 mol %.
- 13. (Currently Amended) A <u>The</u> process as claimed in claim 3 wherein the concentration of iron <del>or vanadium</del> with respect to toluene is in the range of 0.1 5 mol %.
- 14. (Currently Amended) A <u>The</u> process as claimed in claim 3 wherein the concentration of iron <del>or vanadium</del> with respect to toluene is in the range of 0.3 4.0 mol %.
- 15. (Currently Amended) A <u>The</u> process as claimed in claim 3 wherein the concentration of bromine with respect to toluene is in the range of 0.05 5.0 mol.%.
- 16. (Currently Amended) A <u>The</u> process as claimed in claim 3 wherein the concentration of bromine with respect to toluene is in the range of 0.1 3.0 mol %.

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17. (Currently Amended) A <u>The</u> process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the organic solvent emprises is selected from the group consisting of an aliphatic acid or and an aromatic organic acid, or a combination thereof.

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- 18. (Currently Amended) A <u>The</u> process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the organic solvent is selected from the group consisting of acetic acid, benzoic acid and propionic acid.
- 19. (Currently Amended) A <u>The</u> process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the organic solvent comprises acetic acid.
  - 20. (Canceled)
- 21. (Currently Amended) A <u>The</u> process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the concentration of oxygen is in the range of 2-7% in nitrogen.
- 22. (Currently Amended) A <u>The</u> process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the reaction is carried out at a temperature in the range of 70° 180° C and pressure in the range of 1-80 bar.
- 23. (Currently Amended) A <u>The</u> process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the reaction is carried out at a temperature in the range of 90° 160° C and pressure in the range of 20-70 bar.
- 24. (Currently Amended) A <u>The</u> process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the selectivity to benzaldehyde obtained is in the range of 60-75% and benzoic acid and benzyl alcohol are obtained as side products.
- 25. (New) The process as claimed in claim 3 wherein the transition metal catalyst comprises a combination of manganese and vanadium.
- 26. (New) The process as claimed in claim 25 wherein the mole ratio of manganese to vanadium is in the range from 0.1 to 10.
- 27. (New) The process as claimed in claim 26 wherein the mole ratio of manganese to vanadium is in the range from 0.2 to 5.0.

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28. (New) The process as claimed in claim 3 wherein the concentration of vanadium with respect to toluene is in the range of 0.1 - 5 mol %.

29. (New) The process as claimed in claim 3 wherein the concentration vanadium with respect to toluene is in the range of 0.3 - 4.0 mol %.